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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2208
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5197
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1074
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1113
RUEHBA/AMCONSUL PERTH 0945
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 2795
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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 001342

SIPDIS

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NSC FOR EPHU

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SUBJECT: GOI BUILDS CASE AGAINST FORMER GENERAL IN SLAYING
OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

REF: JAKARTA 1252 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The GOI continues to build its case against a former general in the 2004 slaying of Munir Said Thalib, a well-respected human rights activist. The former general--who was an intelligence official at the time of the murder--remains under arrest while the investigation continues. Prosecutors hope to move to the trial stage by September. True to its word, the Indonesian government is working to get to the bottom of who was complicit in the Munir murder. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) BUILDING THE CASE: The Indonesian government continues to build its case in the Munir murder investigation. (Note: Munir was poisoned in October 2004. Pollycarpus Budihari Priyanto, a former Garuda Airlines employee, was convicted for the murder and is serving a 20-year sentence. The GOI is now investigating who may have ordered the slaying. End Note.) The Head of the Indonesian team investigating the murder told DepPol/C on July 10 that police have very strong evidence linking Muchdi Purwopranjono to a plot to kill Munir. (Note: Muchdi is a retired general, Kopassus--Army special forces, and former Deputy of the Indonesian National Intelligence Agency--BIN.)

¶3. (C) Continuing, Head of Criminal Investigations Division Bambang Hendarso told us that the 30 witnesses and pieces of material evidence provided to prosecutors will make for a strong case without the need for a confession. Hendarso declined to reveal the nature of the evidence. (Note: Reftels speculate on the character of the evidence based on non-police sources.)

¶4. (C) MOVING TOWARD A TRIAL: Hendarso said prosecutors are reviewing the evidence and feel it may be possible to move toward a trial in September. In the meantime, Muchdi remains in jail, denying all charges. Hendarso would not comment on whether other senior officials might later be implicated. He repeated what he had said in earlier meetings about the apparent motive, relating it to anger among some in the GOI about Munir's investigation into past human rights abuses.

15. (C) Hendarso pointed out to DepPol/C that he has kept his promise given 11 months ago to U.S. Senate Staffer Keith Luse that the GPOI would take steps to "get whoever may have been behind the murder."

16. (C) POSITIVE MOVEMENT: President Yudhoyono and his administration have underlined repeatedly and in public that progress must be made in this key case. In a July 14 meeting with Pol/C, an Assistant to the President working in the International Relations Office noted that the case remains a high priority and that further arrests may be possible. Overall, while the GOI needs to continue to press the matter, holes in the long-time culture of impunity are already appearing.

HUME